Cantos del peregrino. Appointed director of the Public Library of Buenos Aires in 1858 (a post he held until his death), Mármol was much admired as the heir to the political ideas of Esteban Echeverría. He is an important writer of the generation of the Romantics, whose life and work centered on beliefs in liberty and democracy for Argentina and South America.

See also **Echeverría, Esteban.**

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MAGDALENA GARCÍA PINTO

MAROONS (CIMARRONES). Maroons (Cimarrónes), African fugitive slaves. *Marronage*—the flight of enslaved men and women from the harsh discipline, overwork, and malnutrition associated primarily with plantations—was a common occurrence in the Americas and Caribbean from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. Originally believed to be of Spanish origin (*cimarrón;* French *marron*), the term "maroon" is now thought to derive from a Hispaniola Taino root meaning "fugitive," which converged with the Spanish *cimá* (mountaintop). The term was originally applied to livestock in the Hispaniola hills and to fugitive Amerindian slaves.

Grand marronage (desertion leading to the establishment of permanent, autonomous settlements on the fringes of plantations or in remote forest, swamp, or mountain areas) must be distinguished from *petit marronage* (individual absenteeism or permanent flight from country to town or sea, from one colonial society to another, where the fugitive could pass for free). This discussion concentrates on *grand marronage,* since neither absentees nor urban and maritime fugitives separated themselves permanently from the slaveowner's society.

Known variously as *quilombos* (Jaga *ki-lombo,* "war camp"), *mocambos* (Mbundu *mu-kambo,* "hideout"), and *palenques* (palisades or stockades), Maroon settlements developed from the southern United States to South America. Maroon communities were more numerous and longer-lived in territories where enslaved Africans vastly outnumbered Europeans.

Maroons developed a variety of military, social, and political relations with Amerindians as allies, domestic slaves, spouses, and advisers of chiefs. In northern Ecuador, for instance, the republic of Esmeraldas emerged in the sixteenth century from the wreckage of a slave ship whose slave passengers escaped and settled among Amerindians. Their Zambo, or Afro-Amerindian offspring, dominated the new state. In sixteenth-century Venezuela, fugitive slave miners lived peacefully with the Jirajara on the San Pedro River in the first of numerous Maroon settlements uniting Africans and Amerindians. African Maroons and their Afro-Carib offspring came to dominate the Carib on the island of St. Vincent. In other instances, such as the Amerindian Miskito of Nicaragua and Honduras and Florida's Seminoles, Amerindians enslaved African fugitives. In the Seminole case, Maroons retained a separate identity and acted as political advisers. In other cases, however, Amerindians assisted Europeans in capturing or killing Maroons and destroying their communities.

Founded by west, central, and east Africans, Maroon societies blended many African, Amerindian, and European cultural traditions in ways based on the contemporary colonial situation, one aspect of which was the disproportion between women and men resulting from the slave trade, as well as from the low fertility of women in monocultural plantation environments. As long as Maroons remained at war with Europeans, the hardships of warfare and bush life tended to suppress fertility. Maroon men tried to solve the shortage of women by kidnapping women for wives, a major reason for raids on plantations and Amerindian settlements. Peaceful Maroon relations with Amerindians provided alternative access to wives, and one of the benefits of peace between Maroon communities and colonial states

Jamaican Maroons at the 264th Annual Accompong Maroon Festival, 2002. The festival, held to commemorate the birthday of Maroon leader Captain Cudjoe and his victory over the British in 1738, features traditional Maroon food, dancing, and other festivities. AP IMAGES

was a rise in the Maroon birthrate and a corresponding increase in the female Maroon population.

Their initial scarcity enhanced the value of Maroon women. As farmers and processors of food, women were responsible for the Maroon food supply. Women presided over Maroon villages; they assumed responsibility for children and the elderly while young men engaged in hunting, surveillance, war, and later in migrant wage labor that took them from the villages.

Females exercised authority through their role as spirit mediums. In the 1730s, an eastern Jamaican Maroon woman, Nanny, founded Nanny Town, later Moore Town, in the Blue Mountains, as a women's and children's refuge from English attacks. Maroons consider Nanny the greatest female Maroon sorcerer, crediting her with repulsing the English by supernatural means and averting Maroon starvation with pumpkin seeds obtained from the spirit world. In Suriname, 80 percent of the mediums of the three main Djuka Maroon spirit cults were women.

Like spirit mediums, twentieth-century female composers also enunciated women's grievances. Indeed, a career as a renowned singer preceded Ma Fiida's rise to leadership in the male-dominated Gaan Gadu cult. With lyrics expressing love and happiness tempered by sadness, rejection, jealousy, and despair, songs provided outlets for female grievances and aggression and brought fame and status to female composer-singers.

In spite of occasional male-female conflicts, Maroons maintained sufficient unity for the task of self-defense. They established stockaded, booby-trapped settlements of various sizes, strategically located in inaccessible swamps and forests or on hills or mountains. Networks of slave and Amerindian allies provided intelligence to Maroons and acted as middlemen in the exchange of Maroon produce and

goods for arms and tools. Slaveowners and state officials feared Maroon raids, desertion of laborers, and the undermining of slave discipline.

Europeans counterattacked by passing fugitive slave acts, offering bounties for captured fugitives, and by dispatching armed units, including specially commissioned slave, free black, and Amerindian soldiers. Captured Maroons incurred severe punishment, including imprisonment and execution, hamstringing, wearing of spiked metal collars, and deportation. Marronage could not be eradicated, however. Some settlements were destroyed, but others emerged and many have survived until the present time. Many Maroon groups forced colonial authorities to negotiate peace treaties that recognized Maroon semiautonomy and ceded land to Maroons in return for their cooperation in suppressing slave rebellions and hunting slave fugitives.

The extent of Maroon cooperation with European authorities varied, and peace treaties were broken repeatedly by both sides. Suriname's Maroons continued to welcome new fugitive slaves, for instance, and the Brazilian government and the seventeenth-century Maroon state of Palmares frequently broke peace treaties until the final conquest of Palmares in 1697.

Mature Maroon communities developed complex economies. They grew a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, including rice, and often harvested surpluses. They also produced forest products like timber, salt, and palm wine, as well as building materials and utensils, hammocks, ropes, and beeswax candles. What they did not make they acquired by trade, developing widespread commercial networks with slaves, free people of color, and European settlers.

From the late nineteenth century, colonial economic development began to encroach on many Maroon communities, drawing them into the economic life of colonies and republics and, in some cases, depriving them of their lands. Colombia's San Basilio remained isolated until the early twentieth century, when men began to work in the expanding sugar industry and on the Panama Canal. Cuba's eastern Maroons played an important role in the island's first and second wars of independence in 1868 and 1899, only to lose their farms to North American land speculators and sugar companies and to be ousted from the labor market by Spanish and West Indian immigrants. They rebelled unsuccessfully in 1912. Post–World War II bauxite mining and dam construction proletarianized and displaced Suriname Maroons, alienating them from the urban ruling class. Between 1986 and 1991, Maroons formed the insurrectionary Jungle Commando, which gained control of most of southern and eastern Suriname. Their fate remained uncertain after their leader, Ronnie Brunswijk, negotiated a secret peace with the Suriname government in 1991.

See also **Slave Revolts: Spanish America.**

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